

Item #23: Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon Nest Management Plans

Evaluation Objectives: To evaluate progress in the development of nest management plans for the bald eagle and peregrine falcon.

Methods: Habitat capability is estimated by compliance with Forest Plan standards and/or development and adherence to site specific nest/territory management plans.

Evaluation: Site specific bald eagle territory management plans were developed in the late 1980s or 1990s cooperatively with other federal, State of Montana, and private land managers, and implemented for 6 of the 13 active territories currently being monitored. An acceptable management option in the absence of specific management plans is to manage nesting habitat with concentric zones (nest, primary use and home range) according to the 1994 Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan. The one peregrine falcon eyrie known on the forest does not have a management plan. Coordination with the Peregrine Fund and Montana Peregrine Institute occurs.

The bald eagle has been removed from the endangered species list in 2007 and will continue to be monitored. The recovery of the bald eagle is due in part to habitat protection and management actions, and the reduction in levels of persistent organochlorine pesticides (such as DDT) occurring in the environment. Continued use and successful production of young suggests that current management is maintaining nest habitat potential at known sites. Flathead Forest Plan standards, such as protection of existing old growth, retention of higher densities of snags, emphasis on restoration of fire as an ecological process benefit this species, and application during project development and implementation of the 1994 Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan specific direction and guidance for recovery, appear fully consistent with agency direction to maintain well-distributed habitat consistent with sustaining viable populations of bald eagles.

The peregrine falcon was removed from the endangered species list in 1999 and continues to be monitored. Over the past decade, the forest eyrie is one of the more productive nest sites in Montana.

Recommended Action: Continue cooperative actions to monitor nest locations for occupancy and reproduction. In the absence of specific or up-to-date management plans apply the 2010 Montana Bald Eagle Management Guidelines¹ and LRMP Standard #5 as guidance during site specific project analysis. Complete or update, and cooperate in management plan development as time allows.

Continue cooperative actions to monitor nest locations. In the absence of a specific management plan for the known forest eyrie, apply the American Peregrine Falcon Recovery Plan and LRMP Standard #5 as guidance during site specific project analysis. Complete or update, and cooperate in management plan development as time allows.

¹Bald Eagle Working Group. 2010. Montana Bald Eagle Management Guidelines: An Addendum to Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan, 1994, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Helena, Montana.